

Don't

Park

Here!



by Oral Roberts

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Introduction

In this world we human beings seem to be eternally on the lookout for a place to park. Everywhere we look we see signs that say, "Don't Park Here" or "No Parking Allowed." Signs on highways say, "Keep Off Shoulder." Signs in our public parks say, "Keep Off Grass" or "No Camping."

These signs are designed for our safety and are meant to keep us in our proper place. But there seems to be a tendency in many of us to want to find the easy way out, and in spite of all the warnings we still sometimes park where we have no business parking.

We not only park our automobiles, but we "park" ourselves as well. We park our bodies by not exercising them to keep the blood pumping freely and the muscles toned. We park our minds by ceasing to ask why we are here, where we are, and what we are.

This is especially true in the realm of the human spirit. We park our souls in places and

in ways that God doesn't want us to. We park in matters of our spirit. We think life is something that we can stop, put aside, and do with as we desire when we get good and ready.

But life is like a stream, and the water must continue to flow forward in order for our lives to count for anything at all. Yet we

continue to park in places where we shouldn't along life's journey in spite of the fact that one of the threads running throughout the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation is the message, DON'T PARK YOUR LIFE. DON'T PARK YOUR SOUL. DON'T PARK YOUR MIND. DON'T PARK YOUR BODY. *DON'T PARK ANYWHERE ON THE WAY TO GOD'S HIGH CALLING FOR YOU!*

In this book I show you how to stop parking and start reaching out to the glorious future God has for you.

Chapter 1

Don't Park by Your Past

Reach God's High Calling for You

If there ever was a man who had a right to park, it was the apostle Paul, who was known as Saul before he became born again. As a young man, Saul received his theological education in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel, the great rabbi who was head of the theological seminary among the Hebrew people. (See Acts 22:3.)

With all of Saul's education and training he had become the crown prince of the Jewish religion. *But I don't know of anybody who had a worse past than Saul!*

He was so turned on to the law of Moses and the old religious traditions that he began to persecute Christians. After the resurrection of Jesus, the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost, and the Christian Church was formed and began to flower and fill the world. When Saul saw this, he flew into a rage and turned against the Christians with a hate that's not been paralleled since.

He rose up with authority from the chief priest in Jerusalem and began to throw Christians into prison under false accusations. (See Acts 8:1-4.) He even caused some of them to be put to death. **Really, Saul was living a terrible life because he was parked away from God.** He was the most dangerous man in the world to God's people, *and it took the Lord to stop him!*

Jesus saw that Saul was going to lose his soul and that he was doing too much damage to His people, to His church. Acts, chapter 9, tells the dramatic story of God's intervention.

One day while Saul was on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus to throw more Christians into prison, Jesus appeared to him in a brilliant light from the heavens. That light shone round about Saul, knocking him to the ground, and suddenly he was blind.

Saul was lying there, unable to see and no doubt stunned and confused, not understanding what was happening, when suddenly he heard the voice of the Lord say to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Saul replied, "Who are You, Lord?" and He said, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting," showing us that when we persecute a child of God, we're really persecuting Jesus Christ Himself!

Then Saul, trembling and astonished, asked the Lord, "What do You want me to do?" Jesus instructed the young man, "Get up and go into Damascus like

you'd planned, and it shall be told you what you must do."

Saul was led into Damascus to the house of a man named Judas. Saul stayed there for three days and nights, not eating or drinking, and no doubt looking at his past and realizing for the first time how he had parked his life away from God.

Meanwhile, the Lord appeared to Ananias, a Christian in Damascus, and instructed him to go to the house where Saul was staying, lay hands on him, and pray for him to receive his sight.

You can be sure that Ananias was scared to death to obey the Lord's command because he knew all about Saul's bad reputation! But

Jesus assured him, "Don't be afraid of him because I've called him to take My Gospel to Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel." So even though Ananias knew he was one of the very Christians Saul would have persecuted, put in jail, and possibly executed, he still went to Saul and threw out his arms to him in love.

Now it takes a great deal of faith for us to throw out our arms to a bitter, hurting world who wants to reject us for our gospel message, to come to the very ones who are persecuting us and say, "My brother, my sister, I love you." But Ananias threw out his arms to Saul and prayed for him, saying, "Brother Saul, receive your sight!"

All of a sudden the scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he was healed not only of his physical blindness but of his spiritual blindness as well!

At that moment, Saul realized what hatred had filled his soul. He looked at his past and saw what he had caused others to do when he had forced them to deny their faith in the Lord. No doubt he had a hard time getting over the fact that he had mercilessly persecuted those who were now his brothers and sisters in Christ. Certainly he could have parked his life beside his past. **But praise God, instead he rose up and cast his past aside and refused to park beside it!** As Ananias laid his hands on Saul, he received Christ as his Savior, was baptized in the Holy Spirit, and took up the high calling of God to bring the Gospel to the Gentile world!

Saul, who became known as the apostle Paul, went on to heal the sick and raise the dead by the power of God. He wrote more than one-half of the entire New Testament. *And he stands today as the greatest apostle who ever lived!*

PUT THE PAST IN THE PAST, AND REACH AHEAD TO GOD'S GLORIOUS FUTURE FOR YOU!

Every one of us has things in our past that we're ashamed of. At some time in our lives we've all said, "I wish I could live parts of my life over again. I wish I hadn't done some of the things I did. I'd give anything if I could recall that harsh word I said, that awful deed I did."

How did Paul say we are to deal with our past? In Philippians 3:13 he told us to forget those things which are in the past and look forward to what lies ahead!

You may say, "It's impossible for me to forget my past!" Friend, I, too, have things that come up in my mind at times that I'd give anything if I could forget—things I've done that displeased God, where I almost lost my life and my soul, and I nearly parked myself away from the Lord. I want to take those things and hurl them into eternity, but my memory seems to latch on to them. In Philippians 3:13,14 Paul gives us the keys to forgetting the past instead of parking in it. He said,

This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high

Don't Park by Your Past calling of God in Christ Jesus.

NUMBER ONE: REACH FORWARD

Paul told us to look ahead and reach forth to the things which are before. In other words, start reaching out for the things of God! I'm sure you know what it's like to reach for something that is high up in your house. You stand up on your tiptoes, stretch every part of your body, and with your fingertips, grab hold of it and try to roll it toward you till you get it in your hand. Or you may reach out to save someone from falling or reach out to steady yourself when you're about to lose your balance. *But you reach!*

How do you reach forth in your life? The Bible says in Philippians 4:8,

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

IN OTHER WORDS, SHIFT YOUR MIND AWAY FROM THINKING ABOUT THE BAD THINGS IN YOUR PAST, AND START THINKING ABOUT THE GOOD THINGS GOD PROMISES IN HIS WORD FOR YOU NOW AND IN THE FUTURE!

When you focus your thoughts and attention on God, your heart ignites with faith to **press toward the mark**, which is the second way Paul tells us how not to park.

NUMBER TWO: PRESS ON

When I was a little boy growing up in Oklahoma, my Grandfather Roberts was a frontier judge before Oklahoma became a state and it was still Indian territory. I remember how he would bring my brother Vaden and me up to his house when we were little boys, and he would stand us up against the wall and mark how tall we were.

Each week when we'd come back, he would tell us, "Stand up here again," and he would draw another mark to see how much we had grown from the week before. He would look at the marks he drew for us each visit and tell us they would keep getting higher as we grew. He would always say, "Someday you're going to make your mark in the world."

God is telling us in verse 14, "Press toward the mark that I've drawn for you. I have a height for you to reach. I have a distance for you to travel. I have a life for you to live. I have a glory for you to receive. I have a power that I want to impart to you. I have a goal for you to reach. *Don't park beside your past, but press on toward the mark and reach for the glorious future I have for you!*"

Friend, you're not going to make your mark unless you press forward and start reaching toward the things of God. Yes, it takes effort. It takes faith. It takes determination. It takes willpower. Any old dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live one to swim upstream toward God! Which kind are you?

NUMBER THREE: LAY HOLD

Lay hold of the high calling of God! My Uncle Willis used to say, "Oral stutters so bad, he'll never amount to anything." But Papa said, "He's the one who will preach the Gospel."

Now I was born a stutterer. I couldn't even say my name without stuttering the first day I went to school. But Papa knew that God had a calling for my life.

I never had any idea that God had a high calling for my life. I had my own calling all figured out, my own path to travel, my own way to take. But God had a calling for Oral Roberts' life to preach His Gospel, take His healing power to my generation, build Him a university built on His authority and the power of the Holy Spirit, and to build a nationwide Christian television network.

And I believe that God has a calling, a purpose, for you too! He has marked you and put a plan for your life in your heart—a plan that is His highest calling in life for you! **BUT YOU CAN'T REACH IT BY PARKING IN YOUR PAST!**

You may be facing something in your past that you know is baggage. It's an albatross around your neck. You know it's hindering you. You know it's a bad thing, and somehow you've been unable to deal with it. **Forget the bad things**

you've done, and don't let them rear their ugly heads again! Why? Because when you do, it has a tendency to pull you off God's path, take the joy out of your life, and make you forget who you are now in Christ Jesus!

Oh, it's so important to keep the engine running, to keep your soul in tune with God, and keep reaching, pressing, and moving forward in God! The way to reach the manifestation of God's calling for you is not to stop but to keep pressing onward until you attain it. *PRAISE GOD, WHEN YOU'RE LIVING IN THAT HIGH CALLING, WHEN YOU ACCEPT GOD'S PLAN AND HIS PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE, THEN YOUR PAST WILL FADE AWAY!*

Now if you're having problems dealing with any sin in your past, this next chapter is *for you!*

Chapter 2

Don't Park by Your Sin

You Can Have a Clean Slate With God!

I grew up in a denominational church, and at one time I thought that when you got saved, you reached a place where you never sinned and never had a misstep. *Well, only one Man who ever lived has never sinned—Jesus Christ!* I know of nobody on earth—no human, no saint of God—who hasn't had some shortcomings in his or her life. Really, that's what sin is; it's coming short of the glory of God (see Romans 3:23).

Sin is something we all have trouble with.

But that doesn't mean we're lost forever! John, chapter 8, tells the gripping story of a woman who was lost in sin until she met a Man named Jesus. The Bible says that she was caught in the very act of adultery by religious leaders, who then brought her to Jesus and threw her at His feet, saying, "Lord, what should be done with a woman like this?"

Now in that day, according to the law of Moses, a woman caught in the act of adultery faced certain death by stoning. But the Bible says that Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground and answered those pious men, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone at her."

One by one the woman's accusers slipped away in shame until Jesus was left alone with her. When they had all departed, He looked at her and asked, "Woman, where are your accusers? Does no man condemn you?"

"No man, Lord," she replied.

"Neither do I," He said. Then came that great pronouncement from the Savior, "Go, and sin no more." Jesus was really saying, "Woman, don't park in your sin. Get up out of your miserable immorality. Get up, and go forward in the things of God! Reach out, and lay hold of all the good God has for your life."

When the religious leaders brought the woman to Jesus and threw her at His feet, she was caught up in the fascination of sin. Sitting there in the dust, she had the stamp and mark of adultery upon her. But Christ knew if she would accept His forgiveness and get up from the dust, straighten herself up, and walk off like a lady, she could be what she always wanted to be. *And that's what she did!*

The woman picked herself up off the ground, looked into the loving face of Jesus, and accepted His forgiveness. *Suddenly she wasn't unclean anymore!* The sweet forgiveness of the cleansing power of Christ radiated through her soul, and she became a whole woman! She became good enough for the arms of any man, pure enough to be the mother of any child! She walked away in the strength of

God, ready to step into the high calling He had for her life, *because she refused to park beside her sin!*

When you're lost in a sinful situation like that woman was, it's the most wonderful thing in the world to be able to come to the Master and have the healing balm of His forgiveness cleanse you so that you can live with the sun shining in your face and the angels singing in your soul!

I know a preacher who fell into sin, but when he refused to park there, he experienced the cleansing power of God's forgiveness. He went to another minister whom he knew would not betray him, and he confessed his sin. That minister pointed my friend to Jesus and gave him this great advice on how to get rid of sin instead of parking in it:

Number one, give your sin to God by repenting of it. The Bible says in I John 1:9,

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we don't confess our sin, we give in to the devil, and you can be sure that he'll multiply that sin and lead us to more and more sin, until soon we're unrighteous. And unrighteousness can damn our souls in hell! But when we face up to our condition, when we forsake the attitude of parking by our sin and turn to God for forgiveness, it will bring a change in our lives!

Number two, put your sin under the cleansing blood of the Savior. When you do, it's as if it never happened! God says, "When your sin is under the blood of Jesus Christ, I can't see it. The blood covers it. It's gone!" You see, man remembers, but only God can forget! **He not only forgets our sin, but He casts it as far from Him as the east is from the west** (see Psalm 103:12)! Praise God, when we confess our sin, He forgives us and He wipes the slate clean! As a result, we can become a new man or woman in Christ Jesus (see II Corinthians 5:17)!

My pastor friend followed the minister's advice, and since then he's won many souls to Christ because he knows what sin is. He knows what unrighteousness is. He knows the terrible results sin can have on a soul when you don't ask for forgiveness. *Now he has a passion to win the lost to Jesus because he knows what it's like to get trapped by his own lust, fall into sin, and almost lose everything, including his relationship with the Lord!*

THE DEVIL MAY COO LIKE A DOVE AND SING LIKE AN ANGEL, BUT ONLY GOD CAN SATISFY YOUR SOUL!

Are you under assault by the devil? Are you struggling with some type of sin right now? Are you carrying around some extra baggage in your soul? Are you bound by some sin from your past, and satan is telling you there's no way

out?

Or maybe you're at the very point of backsliding—and sliding backward is dangerous. If you slide forward, you know where you're going. Often you can throw your hands out and catch hold of something and stop yourself. *But if you backslide, you slide backward; you throw out your hands, but there's nothing to grab ahold of!* Let me tell you, backsliding is a far greater predicament to be in than most preachers emphasize!

Now I've never backslidden in my life, and I don't want to ever have that experience. But I know that backsliding begins with one little sin and then another and another, until sinning becomes a way of life. But in case you think you've backslidden the first misstep you make or the first sin you commit, I want to make it clear to you that that's just not true! **God didn't arrange His kingdom like that!** You're His son, or you're His daughter.

And you're not going to backslide the first time you do something wrong!

The trouble with doing something wrong is that it can lead to doing the next thing wrong, then the next thing, until an attitude of sin develops. After a while you're like the prodigal son—you don't know what you're doing. (See Luke 15:11- 32.)

In this parable, a man had two sons. The Bible tells how the younger son asked for his part of his father's estate which belonged to him so that he could go off to a far country and pursue what he thought was an exciting life. His father granted his desire.

I believe God included the story of the son's choice to remind us that we're not machines. We're not animals of the field. We possess far more than intellect and instinct. Each one of us has a soul. We have a mind; we have intelligence. And God has made us in His image by making us free moral agents. We can say yes, and we can say no. We can stay, or we can leave. We can walk with God, or we can walk away from God. He has made us like that so we can choose.

Every time a man chooses to sin, he is taking a step down in life. Every time he chooses to pursue a course of action that is contrary to the Bible and God, he is choosing a course that leads away from God, down from heaven, and toward hell. When the prodigal son chose to walk away from his father and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, he started in a downward spiral, and he quickly wasted what his father had given him. Soon he found himself in dire need.

Now you can be sure that he was surprised at how deep his want was. You see, once he had spent all of his substance on riotous living, he found that *no man gave unto him*, because what he needed no man could give. And our souls are exactly like that. The devil can coo like a dove and sing like an angel, but

nothing he can do; no sinful pleasure in the final analysis will satisfy what we long for inside. Whether we are broke or rich, this is true. Only God can fill the empty void inside every man, woman, and child.

The prodigal son was alone in a far country, and he was so empty inside and had such depth of want that he ended up working for a stranger, feeding his pigs, which to a Jew at that time was the lowest degradation of all.

In the midst of the degradation into which he had plunged, all the prodigal could think of was his father and his father's house. He dreamed of the hired hands who were employed by his father. He could imagine their eating and drinking and living in good homes while he was living in a filthy pigpen. That's when the Bible says, *He came to himself* (v. 17).

Now I want you to think about that statement for a moment. Does it mean that all the time he was gone, all of those months and years he was running through the wealth he had and riotously throwing his life away in sinful pleasures, he was not himself? Is there a form of insanity into which man indulges when he commits sin and he's away from God? Is sin insanity? Is man insane when he sins?

Perhaps it's not insanity in the sense that psychiatry would call it that. But I believe sin is a form of insanity, for how can a man — made in the image of God, created in a world of beauty and surrounded by the blessings of his Creator — turn away from God? How can he take his life and throw it away? How can a man walk away from his wife and children for some other woman? Or how can a woman walk away from her husband and children for some other man? How can a man or a woman take a whiskey bottle and become an alcoholic? How can they defile themselves with drugs or with sexual promiscuity? What kind of insanity possesses them?

Friend, when we get into sin, we're not ourselves! We're not in control of ourselves, even if it seems to be only a little sin! Why? Because even a little sin will hurt your conscience if you're close to God. But when you start backsliding, you get further and further away from the Lord; and when you commit a big sin, it doesn't seem to bother your conscience as much any more. THEN SIN BECOMES A WAY OF LIFE FOR YOU!

But sin doesn't have to reach that point. God shows us the way back to Him in the following story.

'WELCOME HOME, MY CHILD!'

When the prodigal son hit rock bottom and he came to himself, a light came on. A door opened inside his heart. He was able to look up and realize what he had done, where he was, and how unsatisfying his life was. And in his next

breath he decided, "I will repent and go home to my father!"

Did you know that repentance is possibly the greatest gift God can give us as sinners? Why? Because repentance is the beginning of the word *father* in our minds. Down deep inside we have to realize that we have gone away from God, our Father, and the life we have been living is not right. And when we whisper His Name, it is not in arrogance, but in deepest humility.

When the young prodigal made up his mind to return to his father, he decided that when he arrived he would say,

"Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man" (vv. 18,19 TLB).

I'm sure he was surprised that he could repent and say the word father again, and he was probably even more surprised at the welcome his father gave him.

You see, at that time the prodigal didn't know what kind of reception he would receive when he returned home. All he knew was that he was not right with God, that he was unworthy, that his sinful lifestyle had plunged him into a downward course, and that he was the one responsible for the misery in his soul and the want that no man could supply.

What was his father's reaction? The Bible says that while the son was still a long distance away his father saw him coming, and he was filled with such love and compassion for his son that he ran to meet the young man and embraced him and kissed him!

The son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and I'm not worthy to be called your son." But the father stopped him and called to his servants to bring out the finest robe in the house and put it on him and to put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then he told them to kill the fatted calf and make a banquet in celebration of his son's return home!

We don't have to revel in sinful pleasures and run through our money like the prodigal son did to find out how incapable this world is of satisfying our deeper spirit. There is a point and a time and a place in life where the soul literally screams out to God and reaches toward its Maker. It can be satisfied only when Christ Himself puts His hands upon us, draws us to His bosom in a loving embrace, and says, "Welcome home, My child!"

Friend, if you're parked in a sinful lifestyle or in a sin that has caused you to backslide, I want to ask you perhaps the most important questions of your life:

Do you ever intend to come home to your heavenly Father? Do you ever intend to pray again? Do you ever intend to surrender your life to Christ? Do you ever expect the Lord to have a hand in your life? Do you ever expect to come out

of that sin? Are you going to be that way the rest of your life without ever making a decision for Jesus? OH, DON'T PARK THERE!

If you park in that unspiritual condition, it won't be long until you are a sinner. But oh, I have good news! God forgives the worst sin as readily as He forgives the mistakes of a little child. All you have to do is reach out in childlike faith and receive Him into your heart (see Matthew 18:3,4). Salvation, repentance, and re-dedication are simple: you come, you repent, and you believe on Jesus Christ.

I believe the most important thing the Lord would have me do in this book is pray an earnest, believing prayer of salvation and rededication with every person who needs to be saved, whose relationship with Jesus needs to be restored, or whose soul needs an outpouring of Holy Ghost fire! So before we go any further, I'm going to stop and give you the opportunity to surrender your life to Jesus, rededicate your life to the Lord, and come home to your heavenly Father.

My brother, my sister, please don't read another page of this book and not be saved by the blood of Christ! Don't stay parked in your sin and let one day slip out of this life into eternity in that condition! Square things with the Lord right now. Make a decision that from this moment on you'll belong to God. Christ will be in your heart, He will be by your side, and you'll walk and talk with Him as long as you live. Repeat this prayer with me out loud, and begin a brand-new life in Jesus starting today:

O Lord God, be merciful to me, a sinner. I am deeply sorry for the wrong choices I've made in my life, and I sincerely repent of every sin I've ever committed. I turn away from that sinful lifestyle, and I turn my life over to You. Come into my heart,

Lord Jesus, that I may be saved and not park my life in sin any longer, for I believe in my heart and confess with my mouth that You are the Son of the living God.

I'm getting up right now, and I'm coming to You, Jesus. I receive You into my heart and life. I want to give You my best, and I'm asking You for Your best. I'm expecting Your miracle power to touch my life! Lord, I believe, I receive, and I know that Christ is in me! In Jesus' mighty Name, I pray. Amen and amen!

If you prayed that prayer, you've made the most important decision you'll ever make.

Salvation is the beginning of a full and happy Christian life, and through it you have everlasting life!

But before we go on, I want to warn you about one of satan's most subtle traps that many Christians unknowingly fall into. Unfortunately some of the

most need-centered, joyless people in the world are saved people. Why? Because even though they've been born again, they're still parked in some area of their lives that is holding them back from becoming happy, victorious men and women of God.

Perhaps you're parked in something that you feel will hold you back from growing in your walk with the Lord. If you'd like to discover how to move on out of the place you've parked in so that each day you can grow stronger in your faith and believe God for great miracles, *keep reading!*

Chapter 3

Don't Park in Your Sickness

'Make Yourself Scarce!'

Oh, how Jesus hated sickness and disease! One of the things He constantly tried to do while He was on earth was get people to stop parking there. If they were parked, He would try to get them to rise up out of their illness.

The Bible tells about one such occasion when Jesus came into Jerusalem and found His way to the Pool of Bethesda, which was near the marketplace. (See John 5:1-9.) There He found a great multitude of distressed, diseased, and disabled people, many of whom had probably grown old lying at the side of that pool.

Walking among them, Jesus no doubt was looking for someone who had faith, **someone who would respond to His healing power.**

And He found one man out of all those sick, needy people — a man who had been lying there for thirty- eight years.

Now this is one of the strangest things I've ever heard. A man actually spent thirty-eight years of his life in search of healing by the side of a pool of water. Why did he do that? The Bible says that an angel would come at a certain season of the year and stir up the waters, and whoever entered the water first would be healed. So that man spent thirty-eight years —a *lifetime* — in sickness and impotency, lying on a bed by that pool daily, waiting.

When Jesus saw the man, He saw a man who was not only sick in his body but also sick and down in his inner self. Yes, he was lying down physically, but worst of all, he was lying down on the inside. He was lonesome and hopeless, and his inner man had resigned — given up! He had accepted his condition because he was not operating in faith!

Jesus, seeing the man's physical and emotional state, walked up to him and asked him the question, "Will you be made whole?" But the man began to make excuses! He proceeded to explain to the Lord that he had no one to help him into the water. He said, "While I'm trying to get there, someone rushes in ahead of me and gets into the water first and denies me the opportunity to be healed."

Jesus looked the man square in the eyes and didn't accept a single excuse he gave. Instead, He commanded him, *Rise, take up thy bed, and walk* (v. 8). *Friend, Jesus is not in the business of accepting our excuses, but of commanding us TO DO SOMETHING!*

Now it may seem as though that man had great hope—hope that did not die for thirty-eight years—but when you understand the literal translation of what

Jesus told him to do, you'll realize that it was misplaced hope. You see, he had hope in an angel's troubling the water, and he was looking for a man to help him. But he wasn't looking to the One with healing in His wings, the Man Jesus!

When the Lord told him, "Rise, take up your bed, and walk," He was actually saying, "Make yourself scarce! You've been here thirty-eight years too long!" In other words, He was telling him, "Thirty- eight years is a long time to be lying down in that sickness. You've accepted it. You've parked in it. It's time to stand up in the inner man and change your attitude! Stop parking, Brother!"

People hate to hear you talk about your sickness. You may love to talk about it, but the more you talk about it, the more you park in it. You need a change of vocabulary. You need a new conversational topic. **You need to start talking about the Christ who can give you new life!**

There must have been something in the tone of the Master's voice that carried faith and struck the very core of that man's heart, causing him to believe, *because he made himself scarce!* He stopped parking in his sickness and disease!

For the first time in thirty-eight years of being a sick man, he saw that Jesus was greater than the angel who stirred up the water, greater than his illness, greater than his excuses. And it

caused his faith to start acting on Jesus' word to be healed! He made a move to get up. Suddenly he felt the power of God working inside him, and he experienced strength coming into his impotent body. Praise God, within seconds he arose off that bed a whole man, leaping and running from that place of destitution where he had been just minutes before!

Friend, you may feel as lonesome and hopeless as that man did. You may not be expecting to be healed. You may not even realize that the Lord is the same today as He was two thousand years ago. He healed then, and He heals now (see Hebrews 13:8). But I want you to know that you are not forgotten! God loves you more than anyone else loves you in the whole world! *And He wants to heal you, deliver you, and make you whole in your spirit, mind, and body!*

IF YOU WANT TO BE HEALED, MAKE UP YOUR OWN BED!

I wonder what would happen to some of us if we really got healed. Some of us would have to look for a job. Some of us would be called upon to make decisions. Some of us would have to make our own beds for a change!

You see, some Christians have been sick so long that sick is all they ever expect to be, so they've made a ceremony out of their religion. Religion doesn't mean a thing to them anymore. They've been persuaded into thinking that someday they can be healed. But it's never going to happen until they have a

change of heart, until they make up their own beds and stop parking in their sickness and disease, **until they strike a blow for their deliverance by turning their faith loose and declaring, "God, I will be delivered! I WILL BE HEALED!"**

Friend, healing is the tone of the whole Bible because God is against sickness and disease. Christ is against it. Christianity is against it. The Bible is against it. And every Christian should be against it too! But that's not always the case.

When I became ill with tuberculosis at the age of seventeen, some well-meaning Christians brought a shattering message to me that, in effect, I would die. Some of them even told me that God had put that terrible disease on me. I tell you, being a victim of tuberculosis is enough of a load to carry without somebody telling you God has struck you down with it!

Other Christians told me, "We don't know for sure that it's God's will to heal people today," and yet they wanted me to get saved! It was a paradox! *Here God is hammering me with sickness, yet He wants me to love Him?* I thought. It tore my mind up. **However, even though I wasn't a Christian at the time, I knew those were lies of the devil!**

Then my pastor came to see me and said, "Son, be patient." Dear God, if I had been patient, if I had listened to all of them, I would have parked in my sickness, and I would have died! For five months I was in bed with tuberculosis in both lungs, headed for the sanitarium to die. I didn't know God was good, but inwardly I knew those people were wrong! Still, I was angry, and I didn't want the kind of God they were telling me about—a God who didn't heal His children. And tremendous anger rose up in me against the Lord.

Then one day something happened that totally changed my life and my faith in Jesus Christ. My sister Jewel came to my bedside and said, "Oral, God is going to heal you." Then my father told me, "And God's going to save you, Oral." They began to talk to me about the good things of God, about a good God who heals people today. And in the single crisis of that moment, I had a vision of God. When I learned that He might heal my body, in the twinkling of an eye, all my anger against Him fell away. *And for the first time ever I wanted to be a Christian!*

Now at that time there had never been a healing crusade in my hometown. Nobody had ever come to our area with the message that Jesus heals. But one day an evangelist named George Moncey came to town with a big tent. Unfortunately some of the townspeople persecuted him and said all manner of things against him. But he was baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, and he had faith to help people get healed! Despite the opposition, he set up his tent and

began to preach that God could heal, that Jesus is a healing Jesus — *and the gifts of healing began to flow!*

My older brother Elmer went out to the tent to investigate. And when he saw all the miracles taking place, he came back home and told me, "Oral, I'm going to drive you to that healing meeting because God is going to heal you!" You see, faith takes action, *and my family took action!* My brother picked me up on the little mattress I was lying on and put me in the back seat of a borrowed car, with my mother and father in the front seat. Then they drove me to that miracle crusade.

When I first saw the preacher, he literally glowed with the healing power of God, and I saw people healed right in front of my eyes. As it turned out I was the last one prayed for, *but I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was going to be healed!* You see, on the way there, while I was lying in the back seat of the car, I heard God's voice for the first time in my life. He told me, "Son, I am going to heal you, and you are to take My healing power to your generation." **So before that man ever put his hands on me, I knew that I would be healed!**

When the evangelist came over and prayed for me, he simply addressed the sickness. He said, "You foul, tormenting disease, I command you in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, come out of this boy! Loose his lungs, and let him go free!"

That's all he said, but at that moment the presence of God came into my whole being! Suddenly warmth shot up through my feet, my legs, and into my chest, and my lungs opened up like a flower! The coughing stopped, the hemorrhaging stopped, and I could breath all the way down. Oral Roberts was loosed, set free by the power of God!

The next thing I knew, I was shouting, "I'm healed! I'm healed!" and I began running up and down that platform! Not only was I healed of tuberculosis, but I was set free from a stammering, stuttering tongue as well!

Friend, you may be bound by some illness that has the doctors baffled by its power. You may be lying on a hospital bed right now thinking there's no use to try anymore. You may be wondering why fate has dealt you such a severe blow. Or you may be sitting in a chair, hurting. **You may have been ill a long time, or you may have just become ill recently; but you can park there if you're not careful.** You can

give up. You can surrender your inner man to that sickness, and that sickness will sweep over you and absolutely destroy your chances in life. *Don't do it!*

Sickness is no friend of God's and no friend of ours! Acts 10:38 describes it as the oppression of the devil, and when we're sick we must not invite it into our

lives to stay. We must not pamper and pet it and give in to it until we park in it and become engrossed in sympathy, self-pity, and hopelessness.

We are to resist sickness and disease in the Name of Jesus. We are to hate it and call upon the Lord to heal us. We are to seek the best care medical science has to offer. **We are to strive to be well because our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the healthier our bodies are, the more effectively the Holy Spirit can work through us!**

Make a decision right now that this is your hour of healing, that now is the time for your expectant faith to burst into action, and declare this out loud:

Father, in the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, I will not park beside this sickness, this disease anymore. I will not be defeated! I'm going to have God's help. I'm going to have my miracle. I'm expecting my healing. I'm expecting health! PRAISE GOD, I'M GOING TO BE HEALTHY, IN JESUS' NAME!

Chapter 4

Don't Park by Your Failures

Don't Let the Grinding Wheels of Defeat Crush You

How would you have felt had you had the privilege of being one of the twelve men in the Bible who spent three years at Christ's side — who listened to His words personally, who shook His hand, who touched His shoulder, who felt His hand on them, and who were nearer to Him than any other living people? Yet all twelve of the disciples failed the Lord Jesus Christ in the last moments of His earthly life when He needed them the most! (See Matthew 26,27.)

One disciple sold Him out for money. One denied Him three times and said he didn't even know Him! The rest of them jumped up and left Him. They failed Him, and they suffered tremendous spiritual defeat in their lives because of it. But only one of them submitted to his failure and defeat and became discouraged enough to sit down and park mentally and spiritually. His name was Judas Iscariot.

Judas was the disciple who sold Jesus out for money, but he didn't start out that way. At first Judas was a man who had great promise. He was chosen by our Lord to be treasurer. He handled the money. He was the auditor, the accountant. Men such as this are carefully selected, for they must maintain a high degree of integrity.

What happened to Judas? He began to get his mind on the money he took care of, until he loved money above all else. Pretty soon he began to think, *I have a need. They don't need all that money, so I'll just take a little of it.* And he kept on doing that until he reached the big moment when he stole a large amount. Then he decided to get Jesus out of his path so he could get all the money he wanted, or so he thought.

Judas betrayed Jesus by going to the chief priests and offering to hand Him over to them for thirty pieces of silver. When he realized what he had done, it was too late. Jesus had already been arrested, and He was to be nailed to the cross at Calvary.

Judas couldn't take the guilt he felt over the whole thing. So he ended up tying one end of a rope around his neck and the other end around the limb of a tree. Then he jumped off into space so that when his body hit the rocks below, the Bible says his bowels gushed out and his neck was broken. (See Matthew 27:5, Acts 1:18.) *Oh, there's a terrible price to pay when we park in failure and defeat!*

Now I've always believed that Judas' soul could have been saved. I've

studied his life, and I've always thought that if he had gone to Christ after he betrayed Him, if he had gone to the cross where Jesus hung between heaven and earth, dying for the sins of mankind, that Judas could have fallen upon the mercy of the Savior, and Jesus would have received him back. If Judas had caught hold of himself and said, "I'm going to forget that which is behind," if he hadn't allowed himself to park in failure and defeat, his story might have had a different ending.

Had he run up the skull-shaped hill of Golgotha, fallen down at the feet of Christ, thrown his arms around the cross, and looked up and said, "Jesus, I really didn't mean to do this! God forgive me! Give me another chance!" I don't know what could have happened in his life. Perhaps he would have later written the Gospel of Another Chance! But no one will ever know, because he didn't try. **He didn't go to the cross with his failure or to Christ with his defeat.** The trouble with Judas was that after he failed in his apostleship, after he failed as a Christian and a follower of Jesus, he camped there!

Simon Peter was another disciple who was a miserable failure, but he didn't park in failure like Judas did. Yes, he let Jesus down. He alone of all the disciples stands out in his denial of the Savior. The others forsook Jesus and fled, but Peter, the man who had the greatest calling of all the disciples, denounced his Savior in no uncertain terms. He denied Him with an oath, saying, *I do not know the man* (Matthew 26:72)! And he said it in the most crucial moments of Jesus' trial.

This man denied the Lord once, twice, three times! He did it privately. He did it publicly. He did it with a curse. And in that bitter denial, he stood with defeat stinging his soul. But when Jesus turned and looked at Peter in the courtyard of the high priest, it was probably in the same way He had looked at Judas when he betrayed Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. It broke Peter up, and he wept bitter tears. *But they were the tears of repentance!*

When Peter stared his defeat in the face, when he looked at his failure and realized what he had done, in the final analysis he declared, "No, devil, I will not park! I will not sit down beside this thing and let it dog my steps forever and damn my soul to hell!" He ran out and wept, boldly begging God to forgive him. **And God did!** Peter took his denials, his failures, his defeats to his Lord and Savior, and he received the sweetest forgiveness that ever came to a human being. (See John 21:15-19.)

God gave Peter another chance. He went on to the Upper Room and was baptized in the Holy Ghost and fire. And on Pentecost morning when they were speaking in tongues and testifying, *Peter was out front leading the vote!* (See Acts 2.) And he went on to become one of the greatest apostles in all

Christianity!

WHEN PAUL DIDN'T PARK, HE BECAME THE GREATEST MISSIONARY THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN!

Paul was another man of God who could have parked in failure and defeat. When he first began to preach, he had great things happen. Then he and his associates arrived in a city named Lystra. (See Acts 14:6-20.) While there Paul began to reach the people with the supernatural power of Jesus Christ, who had recently risen from the dead and poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room.

Paul preached with great power.

Tremendous miracles took place, and many people were won to the Lord. Then some Jews came from the cities of Antioch and Iconium who didn't like what he was doing, and they turned the crowds into an angry, murderous mob. The Bible says that they picked up stones and hurled them at Paul and then dragged him out of the city and left him for dead! Today people don't use stones to kill believers. They have subtle ways of trying to kill our souls and put us out of the way and leave us for dead!

Those people just walked off and left Paul's crumpled body lying in a heap in the dust, his voice stilled, his hands lying limp and lifeless on the ground. I can just imagine their declaring arrogantly, "No more will Paul the apostle deliver the message of the Gospel to the Gentiles! We have stoned him to death!"

Friend, have you ever been so defeated that you were left for dead as it were? Can you imagine being stoned until your bones were broken, your body was bruised, and it looked as though your life was over? That's what happened to Paul. He lay lifeless, but he wasn't quite dead. He was bruised and battered, brutally beaten almost to death, **but he refused to park by what appeared to be the ultimate failure and defeat of his life!**

Meanwhile, the saints of God in that city heard the call of God to gather around Paul and pray. As they lifted up their voices to the Lord in his behalf, suddenly he began to move — perhaps first a hand, then an arm, a foot, and a leg, then his head. He got up on his knees, then stood to his feet, looked around, and declared, "I'm alive, and I won't park by my defeats or my failures!" Paul went on to another city, continuing to preach the Gospel, and he became the greatest missionary the world has ever known!

Now it just so happened that a young man by the name of Timothy lived in Lystra at that time, and no doubt he witnessed Paul's sufferings. He probably saw all that Paul went through. God got ahold of Timothy's heart, and he decided, *I want what that man's got!* He was led to the Lord through Paul's ministry and eventually became Paul's right-hand man!

Friend, there is nobody alive who hasn't experienced some kind of failure or defeat in life. Those double-barreled weapons of satan have a way of slamming you in the face, knocking you off your feet, taking the starch out of your collar, sucking the joy out of your soul, and putting you down so low that getting up doesn't even cross your mind! When you find yourself in that condition, it's an awful temptation to park, to lie down by your failure, to give up, and say, "Oh, what's the use!" **But don't sit down and let the grinding wheels of failure and defeat crush you!**

Put all that behind you! Rise up from the death and destruction satan has tried to deal you, and walk into new life in Jesus! Look at the future with new eyes. Turn your defeat and failure into victory by putting your foot down and saying, "**Devil, the Bible says that you're under my feet. So take your hands off God's property—me! I'm going forward in victory, in Jesus' mighty Name!**"

JESUS DIDN'T PARK IN FAILURE AND DEFEAT!

Many of us think that Jesus never had a failure, that He was never really defeated, but the Bible tells a different story. In the height of His ministry something happened to Jesus that could have caused Him to park His life forever.

You see, Christ was raised in the town of Nazareth. He grew up there as a boy. And it was in the synagogue in Nazareth that He announced He was anointed and sent by the Holy Spirit to heal and deliver humanity. (See Luke 4:16-21.)

After Jesus had been traveling in the ministry for some time, He went back to His hometown. Of course, He expected to have a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit there and be received wholeheartedly by the people with whom He was reared, *but they wouldn't receive Him!*

When Jesus reached out to the sick and the people in need who lived in Nazareth, many of the town's citizens turned against Him and cried, "Who does He think He is, coming here? He's just Mary's boy. We know His brothers. We know His sisters. We know His foster father who was the town's carpenter!" (see Mark 6:3). They surrounded Jesus with their unbelief, and because of their unbelief, the Bible makes the terse statement: *He could do no mighty work [miracles] there* (v. 5). Notice, the Bible didn't say that He **didn't** do any mighty miracles there. This is the only place it says that He **couldn't**!

That may not sound like much of a failure or defeat to you, but understand that Jesus is the Christ of miracles! Miracles are His domain! **But the unbelief**

of the people in Nazareth threw up such an impossible barrier that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, could not perform a single great miracle in His own hometown!

What do you think was going through Jesus' mind at that time? No doubt the devil came to Him that day and whispered in His ear, "Park Your life. You can do miracles everywhere else, but You can't do them among Your own hometown people! You're defeated! You're a failure!" ***But Jesus refused to park!***

Now I know what it's like to live in a hometown. I've lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for fifty years. I know how it can tear you apart inside when you feel like you're a failure in your hometown or you've had a defeat that's shocked your system. You become discouraged because you can't get through to your own people.

And Jesus knew it better than we do. Not only was He defeated from doing one mighty miracle in his hometown of Nazareth, but as He started to leave town many of the citizens rose up against Him! (See Luke 4:28-30.) They grabbed ahold of Him and took Him to the brow of the hill on which Nazareth was built. They were about to cast Him headlong over that steep precipice and kill Him, but He slipped out of their hands. He simply turned and walked right through that bloodthirsty crowd, *and not one of them could stop Him!* Then the Bible says that He went to the next town and began to preach!

When Jesus saw that Nazareth was closed to the healing gospel, He went to those cities that were open to it. He went to where they would hear Him and receive Him, where they would travel for miles just to touch the hem of His garment! **In other words, Jesus didn't stop in Nazareth!** He didn't park beside failure or defeat! He went on to the next town, where His great miracle power was manifested! All that was forbidden Him through the unbelief of the people of Nazareth was gone. The great faith of the people rose, and His successful ministry continued!

Friend, of all the kinds of parking I've mentioned so far, there's none more devastating and ruinous in the lives of people than parking beside failure and defeat! What should you do when you fail in something and you feel the sting of defeat? Whatever failure or defeat you've suffered that's making you feel like parking your life and giving up, **DON'T! GO ON TO THE NEXT PLACE! GO ON TO THE NEXT CIRCUMSTANCE! GET UP AND GO ON WITH YOUR LIFE! YOU'LL NEVER KNOW HOW GREAT YOU'LL BE IN GOD'S EYES UNLESS YOU REFUSE TO PARK!**

IT LOOKED LIKE MY MINISTRY WAS FINISHED, BUT GOD WAS SHAPING MY LIFE THROUGH FAILURE AND DEFEAT!

In 1956 I was dealt a severe blow that could have caused me to pack up and walk away from the healing ministry for the rest of my life. What could have been the biggest failure, the greatest defeat in my ministry didn't happen in this country but in the land down under, Australia. I took the big tent and opened in Sydney, Australia, first, where I had an outstanding crusade. Then we moved on to the city of Melbourne.

Usually I opened a crusade with two-thirds of a crowd, and each night the crowd would grow bigger until the tent was filled to capacity. But in Melbourne we filled up all 10,000 chairs in our great canvas cathedral on opening night! We also had several hundred people come down the aisles to be saved that first night alone, and it looked as though we were going to take that city for Jesus. But just four nights later everything was in a shambles, and we barely escaped with our lives!

At that time Australia had no law in the books to protect ministries or churches, so if you wanted to, you could go into a church and break it up and not be put in jail. I tell you, I've never been fought as hard or called such names, morning and night, day after day, as I was in that crusade!

We were the biggest thing happening in Australia at that time. They had never had a healing crusade of that magnitude before, and the news media seized upon it. They stirred up some of the people and caused them to invade the big tent. An angry mob came inside and hissed and jeered and tried to stop the preaching of the Word and our meetings.

They rushed to the platform and hit me and spit on me and tried to knock me down. They poured beer into the water glass I was using. They rocked the car that Evelyn rode in as she was being driven to the crusade, and they tried to turn it over because they thought I was in it. And they put a contract out on my life!

Back home in America, the insurance company that carried the insurance on our tent received the message that made the headlines in the newspapers, **Mob Going to Burn Roberts' Tent**, and they decided to cancel my insurance. Then the American ambassador warned me, "You've got to get out of the country! They're going to kill you!"

At the end of the fourth night of the crusade, after Evelyn and I had gone to bed, we didn't know it, but at midnight my team had a prayer meeting. They prayed to God for direction, and He gave them this word: "Take the tent down by daylight. Have it on the ship. Come at daybreak for Oral and Evelyn. Put them on the plane, and get them out of the country!"

The news of our sudden departure spread throughout the world. And on the plane returning home, I became so discouraged that I thought my heart would

break. I thought my ministry was over and I would never get to pray for another sick person. *I tell you, satan was on the job, and I became discouraged because it was a failure beyond anything I'd ever known!* I felt terribly defeated, and it looked like I was going to give up and park right there. **But I didn't know that God was shaping my life through what seemed like the biggest failure and defeat of my ministry!**

GOD'S STROKES FOR HIS CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS UPWARD!

One day shortly after the Australia episode, I drove my car out into the countryside around Tulsa. And oh, how discouraged I was!

Now I grew up on a farm, and I've always loved animals. As I looked across the field, I saw a cow about to give birth to a calf. So I parked my car, climbed through the fence, and carefully walked out into the meadow as close as the mother cow would allow me. And I watched her give birth.

When the little calf came out of her and hit the ground, he was enveloped in something that looked like a white plastic shield. He lay still for a moment. Then all of a sudden he began to kick and kept kicking until he kicked himself right out of that white shield.

At first he couldn't stand up very well. He fell down, and when he got back up, he began to wobble as he tried to steady himself on his feet. Then the mother began to lick the little calf with her long, tough, bristle-like tongue.

I watched as she licked her baby and licked him hard, and I noticed that she always licked in an upward motion. She'd take her tongue and lick upward and just pick up that little calf. He would fall over to the left, and she would lick him up. And then he would fall over to the right. Finally she maneuvered him close to her udder, and he smelled the milk and began to nurse.

When that little fellow discovered where the milk was, he was in business, and he drank voraciously! As he drank, he suddenly turned around and fell. Again the mother reached out with her bristly tongue, licked him with an upward stroke, and up he got! She nudged him back to her udder, and he was in business again. That little thing stood there trembling and shaking in his newborn weakness, nursing from his mother. And as he drank, you could see strength coming into his body. *As I watched that whole scene I suddenly realized that just like that mother cow, God gives us upward strokes!*

Now when that little calf was being stroked by his mother, it looked horrible to me. I was thinking, *Why are you doing that? You're going to injure that calf. You may kill it!* But the mother knew what she was doing! She knew that if she licked him with a downward stroke, she could harm him. But when

she licked him with an upward stroke, she could get that little baby to the milk; and with the milk, the baby could live and develop! **And God does the same thing to His children!**

As I look back on my life at every failure and every defeat, no matter how it hurt at the moment, I know it was an upward lick of God. You see, He uses the tough times, the times of failure and defeat, to move us toward the milk of His Spirit, to pour strength into our souls. Why? *So we can stand up strong in faith and run the race, finish the course, and have victory in our lives!*

I wouldn't be alive today if I'd not had God's help when failure looked me in the face and I wanted to park, when defeat was on every side, when I was discouraged, disillusioned, and about to lose my faith because of that Australia crusade. But when it looked like I was going to park, God gave me that upward lick, that upward move of His Spirit. ***And glory to God, that was the first year that a million souls came to Jesus Christ through my ministry!***

I know from firsthand experience that if you were to look at the times you've failed, you'd want to run away. If you looked at your defeats, you'd want to give up, because it's so easy to park! But oh, it's a serious thing to park beside your failure, to resign to your fate!

If you think about it, why would you ever want to sit down and park, fold your hands, and say it's no use when Jesus Christ died on the cross for you, when He rose from the dead to give you another chance, when He sits at God's right hand up in heaven and is interceding for you right now, saying, "Here is life! Here is a new opportunity! **Get up and go on!**" ***When Jesus tells you to stop your parking and go, to get up and amount to something, you can become good enough for anybody and do anything He calls you to do!***

Friend, one of the main reasons I wrote this book is to encourage you and lift you up by my faith to keep you from parking by failure and defeat so that you can be all God wants you to be in life. And I challenge you right now to stand up by faith, brush the dirt off, throw your shoulders back, and declare,

"I REFUSE TO PARK BY MY FAILURES AND DEFEATS! I'M GETTING UP AND I'M GOING THROUGH FOR THE GLORY OF GOD!"

Chapter 5

Don't Park by Your Successes

If You Think You've Arrived, It May Be Time to Check Your Spiritual Vital Signs

When you're having a rough time, and you put out all you've got and give your best, but sometimes it isn't enough, that's tough! But that's not half as tough as when you win. Because when you put it over—when you knock the home run, when you make the touchdown, when you throw the winning basket, when you ace a golf hole, when you make a top grade — and you're winning, that's often a more dangerous time than when you're losing! Why? Because when you stop and look at your successes, the devil's business is to slip up to you and whisper in your ear, "You did it!" And if you're not careful, you'll find yourself agreeing with him, and you'll park by your successes and achievements!

The Bible gives an excellent illustration of the danger of parking there. Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:1-19 vividly depict the rise and fall of Lucifer. You see, the devil was not always the devil. *He was Lucifer, the greatest archangel of all, until he parked by his success and achievements and ended up losing everything God had given him!*

There was a time somewhere in the immemorial past when Lucifer was the chief of angels, the greatest angel God ever created. It was a time before man was created, when heaven was lighted up with the glory of God, and God was sitting on His throne, surrounded by all of His heavenly creatures, the different orders of angels and cherubs.

Slightly lower than Lucifer were Gabriel and Michael, who are both still archangels of God. But Lucifer was the angel who shone the brightest. He had the largest rulership over the other angels, having been given reign over a third of them. He was the closest to God, the angel who was called the anointed cherub who covered the very presence of the Lord Himself, which means he hovered above God and covered His throne (see Ezekiel 28:14).

Lucifer was the son of the morning. His clothing was covered with precious jewels, and he was the most beautiful, the wisest, the most empowered being ever created by God at that time (see Isaiah 14:12, Ezekiel 28:13-15).

But one day Lucifer looked at all of his successes and achievements, and he decided that he wanted to be above God. So he lifted up his heart and cried,

I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High (Isaiah

14:13,14).

In other words, he declared, "I will take God's place! I will be God!" What happened? ***Lucifer parked beside the success God had given him, and in doing so he gave up his relationship with the Creator of heaven and earth, the Almighty Himself!***

When that happened, the Lord declared in a voice that all of heaven heard, "You can't be God!" And He cast Lucifer out of heaven, down to earth, where he was no longer the great archangel (see Ezekiel 28:16,17). Lucifer lost his celestial body and his spiritual comprehension. He became devoid of the light of God, *and he became the devil!* In Matthew 25:41 Jesus tells us that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels, which means He didn't make hell for mankind!

Oh, it's not easy to go to hell! There are many blockades of the Gospel that God throws up to keep us from going to hell, because it's not for us. If anybody ends up going there, that person can't say, "God sent me to hell." You don't go there because it's your place. IF YOU GO THERE, IT'S BECAUSE YOU SENT YOURSELF THERE! YOU WALKED AWAY FROM CHURCH. YOU WALKED AWAY FROM THE GOSPEL! YOU DECIDED TO PUT GOD OUT OF YOUR LIFE, AND YOU PARKED YOUR SOUL AWAY FROM SPIRITUAL THINGS!

GOD HAS RESTORED MY SOUL!

Millions of people in this success-mad world are parking away from God because they're striving to be a success for themselves. Thousands park beside their bankrolls. They feel that they have enough money put aside, and they've got it made. They have enough financial strength, and they don't need common, ordinary things like prayer, faith in God, dependency upon Christ as their Source, and living by the Word of God, such as the Sermon on the Mount and the Ten Commandments. They say, "I just can't get anything out of church. I think I'll give it up." They seem to live in a world by themselves. They follow a personal code. Really, they've parked beside their successes and achievements. BUT, FRIEND, DON'T EVER ALLOW YOURSELF TO PARK THERE, BECAUSE IT CAN CAUSE YOU TO MOVE AWAY FROM YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!

I know a man who almost lost his relationship with the Lord when he found himself on the verge of parking in a successful business arrangement. One time when I was in a certain airport, he roared in in his private jet. We happened to be walking on the concourse at the same time. When he saw me, he waved, rushed over and grabbed my hand, and said, "Oral, I'd rather see you than any man in the world!"

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"I'm in trouble!"

Now I knew quite a bit about this man's life. When he graduated from college he didn't have much, but he had a lot of drive and quickly began to make something of himself. Soon he had made quite a bit of money and had attained a high position. Eventually he had been elected a state senator and had become a wealthy man.

As we stood in the airport, he told me he believed that God had had His hand upon his shoulder all throughout his life and that through every attempt in business or in public life he had been a man of prayer. He had wanted to be honest and sincere. He had wanted to see what God could do with a man whose life was yielded to Him, and he had developed a pattern of giving and sharing what he had with others.

Then he explained, "I've been troubled because I've signed a contract with a certain man, and we're working on a great project together. I've always looked to God as the Source of my life — the Source of my success. But when I went into business with this man and saw how wealthy and how big he was, I took my eyes off the Lord and put them on him. I changed my goals to be like his. I wanted to be a big man like he is.

"But now that man has begun to let me down. He wanted me to water down our contract, and I did what he asked because I felt that he would respect me more if I gave in to him. But I'm losing something out of my life because of it. I've lost my Source. I don't have the same contact with God that I used to have. I've stopped reading my Bible. I've forgotten how to pray." Then he asked me if I would help him start praying again.

"What would you like to say in your prayer?" I asked.

"I would like to tell God that I've gotten my mind off Him and onto this man and that this man is the one I've been looking to for the success of this big deal—the biggest deal of my life. I want to tell Him that I've messed up," he confessed.

"Why don't you say that to Him right now," I suggested, "because that's what prayer is. Prayer is simply talking to Jesus."

A look of hope flashed across his face, and right there on the concourse of that airport he asked me to join hands with him in prayer. Then he began to pray. Soon he became so engrossed in his prayer that he forgot I was there. As I watched him, I saw a wealthy man with tears slipping down his cheeks, pouring his heart out to his heavenly Father.

When he finished praying, the strained look was gone from his face. He straightened up. And it was like he was in a new world. He said, "Oral, this has

been the most exciting moment of my life because as the twenty-third Psalm says, God has restored my soul!" Then he thanked me wholeheartedly and left.

As he walked away, I saw him disappearing into the crowd. But now his shoulders were back and his head was held up high, and I thought about how close to the breaking point he had come.

In a moment of great success, he had almost lost it all. But when he refused to park in success and achievement and he came back to God, he found the Lord right where he had left Him!

Let me tell you, there's no such thing as success the way the world views success. There's no such thing as "arriving." There's no such position where you can say, "I've got it made. I don't need God anymore," **because when you're serving God, it should be a constant, day-by-day affair.** You can never say, "I've worshiped God with my life completely. Now I can sit down. I've made such a success of my life that I don't need to do anything more."

That's just not true! ***Our success comes in worshipping Jesus daily, in living a holy, righteous life, in believing God, and in winning people to Christ!***

PARKING BY SUCCESS CAN CAUSE YOUR HEAD TO SWELL!

I have much reason to be proud. The Lord has been good to me. He has enabled me to achieve some wonderful things in my life, and He has given me much success. He has let me travel in many nations around the world and across the United States with His healing message, and He has brought millions of people to hear me preach.

I remember one year in my ministry when we had a very high Nielsen rating on our Christmas television special. In addition, our television program was rated number one on Sunday mornings, and we were number two in all the TV specials in the nation, including secular programs. That was the biggest rating we had ever had.

It was a huge success, a tremendous achievement, for an Indian boy who came out of the hills of Oklahoma, a boy without much to speak of going for him, to suddenly have all those millions of doors open to his ministry. It was such a large number that I couldn't even estimate them. And I was so thrilled that I had a hard time keeping myself humble. That was dangerous because success has a way of getting hold of men and women and making them look at themselves as though they are better than they really are, as though they achieved their success all alone, without any help from the Lord.

As I marveled over that blockbuster, suddenly I could hear my precious mother's voice in the back reaches of my mind. My little mother was part Indian, and she was only five feet tall. I'm over six feet tall. But I remember how she would pull me down until my face was right next to hers, and she would kiss me,

sometimes wetting my cheek with her tears, as she'd say, "Oral, stay small in your own eyes and obey God. If you do, God will bless the world through you."

What she was telling me was, "Don't think too much of yourself. Don't get the bighead. Don't get the star syndrome. Don't have a big entourage. Don't park in pride. Just be yourself. Stay little in your own eyes, and obey the Lord." She knew I needed to hear that. **And oh, what great advice that was!**

When I remembered those words, I told my associates, "Don't ever tell me again what the Nielsen rating is. I don't want to know. I don't want the temptation to become proud over it, because when I'm on television, I want to be able to speak to just one person. I want to think of a man or a woman or a boy or a girl sitting before the TV set as if it were just that person and me talking to each other. I can't speak to sixty or seventy million people, but I can talk to one human being!"

Friend, one of satan's biggest schemes is to get us puffed up over our successes and achievements because it's the quickest way to cause us to fall into his snare of pride. So watch it when people brag on you. Watch it when you want people to brag on you. Watch it when you reach some level of success and you start to brag on yourself. You can easily park in the No Parking zone of pride! *And pride is a more frightening place to park in than any I've mentioned so far!* Why? ***Because pride can cause you to make wrong decisions and stop you from reaching the high calling in Christ Jesus that God has for you!***

DON'T PARK IN THE OASIS WHEN THE PROMISED LAND MAY BE JUST UP AHEAD!

If we're not careful we can park and become complacent about the successes and achievements of our Christian lives. We can look back at where we've been, see where we've arrived, and forget about where we're going! We can become so comfortable in our present success that we park and fail to finish the race, complete the course, and reach the high calling of God in our lives!

More than three thousand years ago, the two million children of Israel became complacent in their success, and they almost missed the Promised Land. If you recall the story, in their march across the desert from Egypt toward the land of Promise, they came to a spot called Elim. *And they decided to park there.*

You see, when God delivered them from the evil clutches of Pharaoh and they left Egypt, their trip wasn't a pleasant stroll across a flowery meadow. No doubt they watched in shock as the Lord parted the Red Sea by rolling a massive wave of its waters upstream and the rest downstream. Then after He caused a mighty rushing wind to blow all night and dry up the river bed, the people walked across on dry land. (See Exodus 14.)

From there the Israelites moved on out into the wilderness of Shur, where they traveled for three days without water. Finally, they arrived at a place called Marah. But they couldn't drink the water there because it was bitter, and they thought they were going to die of thirst! (See Exodus 15:22-27.)

Needless to say, when they came to Elim and found that it was a little oasis in the desert that had twelve wells of water surrounded by seventy palm trees, they were ready to park! To them it must have looked like a tiny bit of paradise in the middle of that hot, thirsty land, and they decided to set up camp. *As far as they were concerned, they were parking there for the rest of their lives!*

But God had not called His children out of four hundred years of Egyptian bondage to end their journey in Elim. Elim was only a foretaste of things to come! God had a much bigger plan in mind for them, a plan to bring them into a good land of brooks, pools, gushing springs, valleys, and hills ... a land of wheat and barley, of grape vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olives, and honey ... a land where food is plentiful, and nothing is lacking ... *a wonderful land flowing with milk and honey!* (Deuteronomy 8:7-9 and 11:9 TLB). The word of the Lord came to them to rise up from parking, and they continued on toward the land God had promised them!

In their strivings to please God, many people have stopped on the journey of life and camped by some small, insignificant thing, some successful incident, when the land of promise — the thing God has promised them—is just over the next horizon!

I remember the time a pastor friend of mine became complacent and almost parked in his success. You see, he had a beautiful church building with wonderful surroundings. He drew great crowds, and the power of God could be felt in his services. I mean, success was written everywhere!

It just so happened that he invited me to preach at his church. I accepted his invitation and decided to preach a message entitled, "Don't Park Beside Your Successes or Achievements."

Almost immediately after I returned home from that meeting I received a letter from the pastor, saying, "Brother Roberts, I want to tell you that you shook me awake with your message. I built this church, and I have a full congregation. The services are jam-packed, with people even standing along the walls. We have several acres of land, and I've been wanting to build a larger church building. But the city won't give us a permit. So I just stopped and looked around at my success. My building is full. My debts are paid. I'm doing well, and I felt the success of it all. I felt that I had achieved a lot. I didn't say to myself that I had parked, but it meant the same thing.

"I was just sitting there enjoying my accomplishments, not thinking about

anything else God had for me to do, until I heard your message. *And you woke me up!* You made me realize that this success is only the beginning! God has greater success planned for my life, my preaching, my praying, my influence! No matter what I've already done, I can do greater things for my God!

"I'm writing to tell you that I am going to get that permit from the city! They're not going to turn me down anymore! I'm going to build the building that God led me to build! I'm going to extend my borders and lengthen my stakes! I have only just begun!"

Friend, you may think the job you've got, the business you own, the ministry you're in, or the achievements you've completed are all that you'll ever need. But don't park beside the idea that "you've sung a good song"! Don't park beside a great sermon you've preached! Don't park beside a successful business! Don't park beside something wonderful you've done! Don't park beside your successes! Why? Because God may have something better for you! God may have something bigger for you! *God may have something for you that you haven't even thought of yet!* (See Jeremiah 29:11 and I Corinthians 2:9.)

Don't say "I've arrived" just because you've had a measure of success. Decide right now that you're refusing to park there! Instead say,

THANK GOD, I'VE REACHED THIS FAR! BUT, LORD, I'M PRESSING ON TO THE HIGH CALLING YOU HAVE FOR ME, AND I'M GOING TO COMPLETE THE COURSE SET FOR MY LIFE FOR YOUR GLORY!

Chapter 6

Don't Park Beside Your Giving

Great Things Can Happen in Heaven and Earth When You Give and Expect to Receive

Another area Christians have no business parking beside is in giving and receiving. Many believers faithfully give their tithes and offerings to the Lord with no understanding that when you give, *you can expect to receive back from your heavenly Father*. They don't understand that giving is only half the loaf. The other half is receiving.

You see, when you give, if you're not careful you can park there. And when you're parked in your giving, your faith quits. You either forget what your pastor has taught you about receiving and walk right on out of church and never give receiving another thought, or you're simply not familiar with the Bible's teaching on the subject of receiving.

The first time the term *giving and receiving* is mentioned in the Bible is when the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi:

*Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning **giving and receiving**, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account (Philippians 4:15-17).*

Just think about the apostle's words for a moment. Of all the dozens of churches Paul established, only one caught on to his preaching and teaching on the biblical principle of giving and receiving! But there's something about that phrase that's far more important than people realize.

A while back I began a word study of Philippians 4:15-17 because I knew that this was the climax of all the Scriptures God had given me concerning Seed-Faith giving and receiving. I concentrated on the word *receiving*, and I discovered that in the original Greek in which that verse was written, the term *giving and receiving* means "giving and receipting." or giving and getting a receipt.

So Paul was saying, "When you give to God, you have an official receipt from Him for all your needs to be met!" Not only that, but when you give, you're building an account in heaven with Him. Therefore, you've got a receipt, *and you can cash it in!*

It's like going to the bank, depositing some money, and getting a receipt for the deposit. Suppose you write a check, and you want to cash it at the bank

where you have your account. But the bank turns it down. You can show them your deposit receipt, and they'll tell you, "Oh, we've made a mistake. We'll take care of that. Please accept our apologies, and we'll see that it never happens again." Because you have an account at that bank, you are able to cash your check!

In the same way, Paul was saying that when we give to God, we're building a heavenly account with Him. Therefore, we have an account to draw from, and our giving is a receipt we can "cash in" to receive!

Friend; if you've been giving without expecting to receive, you're behind the time — not in your giving, but in your receiving! You've got hundreds of receipts you haven't cashed yet! ***All you've got to do is stop and take one, and cash it in!***

YOUR OFFICIAL RECEIPT FROM GOD IS YOUR TICKET FOR A MIRACLE!

I didn't completely understand Philippians 4:15-17 until a banker friend of mine told me this story:

On a cold, rainy winter's night he was driving back to Tulsa from a banker's meeting when his car got a flat tire. He pulled off to the side of the road, stepped out of the car in the rain and cold, and tried to change it. But he'd never fixed a flat before, and he didn't know how.

He worked and worked at trying to take the wheel off and put the new tire on.

A couple of hours passed, and he finally gave up because he was nearly frozen to death. So he tried to flag down a car to get someone to help him, but no one would stop. He thought,

Well, I may just die here tonight!

Suddenly a trucker pulled up beside him, leaned out the window of his truck, and asked, "What's your problem, Mister?"

When the banker told him, he said, "That's nothing. I can fix your flat in five minutes."

The trucker grabbed hold of a wrench, jumped out of the cab of his truck, and quick as a flash changed that flat tire. When he finished the job, the banker asked him how much he owed him for his help, but the trucker replied, "Not a penny. I'm just glad to do it."

The banker didn't want to leave without giving him something, so he pulled out his checkbook. But the trucker insisted, "No, I don't want any money!" and he climbed back up into his truck.

Meanwhile the banker pulled out a piece of paper and wrote on it. Just as the trucker was ready to pull away and roar off down the highway, the banker

handed the paper to him, saying, "Put this in your wallet. If you ever have a financial need, bring this to my bank, and they'll cash it for you. *That's a receipt from the president of the bank.*"

Well, a couple of years passed by, and the trucker forgot about the receipt until one day he had a need and didn't have the money to take care of it. Then he remembered the piece of paper the banker had given him, so he pulled it out of his wallet and went to the bank. He walked up to teller's window, took out the piece of paper, and handed it to the cashier, saying, "I've come to get my money."

Now the message written on the paper said, "If this man ever needs [and it named an amount of money], give it to him." So the first thing the cashier asked the trucker was, "Do you have an account here?"

"No," he replied.

"I'm sorry," she said, "but I can't cash this."

It just so happened that my banker friend overheard their conversation. He walked out of his office and said to the cashier, "Oh, yes, you can cash it. He has an account with us."

The cashier looked puzzled and told him, "I don't see it on our books."

But he responded, "Do you see my signature on that note? I'm his account! Give him the money!" And because the president of the bank said, "Give it to him," the cashier said, "Of course," and she handed the money to the trucker. *You see, he cashed in his receipt!*

That's a wonderful story which actually happened, and it illustrates perfectly the idea of giving and receipting. But you may be wondering, "Oral, is giving and receipting really Bible-based?" Yes, it is!

In II Kings, chapter 20, you'll find the story of one of the good kings of Israel, a godly man named Hezekiah. All of Israel's godly kings were tithers, and Hezekiah was no exception. And he didn't park beside his giving! **He cashed in his receipt with God when he needed a miracle!** The Bible says:

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying,

I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore (vv. 1-3).

What was Hezekiah doing with his face to the wall, weeping? With the tears rolling down his cheeks, crying so hard that his body hurt, he was reminding God of what he had done for Him. *He was cashing in his receipt!* He was telling

the Lord that he was in *NOW* trouble, and he needed a *NOW* miracle!

After Isaiah delivered that death message to Hezekiah, Isaiah turned and left. But before he could get out of the court of the palace, God told him,

Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of

David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years (vv. 5, 6).

You talk about cashing in a receipt! **That old boy cashed one in, and God turned the whole situation around!**

Friend, that story offers us the answer for all of our needs: GET AN OFFICIAL RECEIPT WITH GOD TO RECEIVE YOUR MIRACLE! Praise God, when you begin to enter into giving AND receiving—when you start believing, "When I give, I'm cashing in my receipt!" — great things begin to happen in heaven and on earth!

GIVING IS YOUR CONNECTION TO GOD'S EVERYTHING IN YOUR LIFE!

I grew up among Christians who believed that you should give, but you should never expect God to give you anything back. And that idea cheated me out of God's blessings for years.

Now I became a tither the night I was converted, and to this day I have tithed ten percent of every dollar that has ever come into my hand. But I wasn't always a cheerful giver. There were times when I was sorry that I had tithed, and I wished I had my money back. Why? Because when I gave, I didn't expect anything back. And if you're into giving and NOT receiving, then you're a miserable giver, **BECAUSE THE JOY OF GIVING IS IN RECEIVING!**

At that time I was not a receiver, and I missed so much of what God had for me! Then one day I discovered III John 2, which says,

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth,

and I learned that God is a good God. I realized that it's His will for us to prosper in every area of our lives. And God stirred my heart to find out more about this new-found revelation.

The Holy Spirit brought a Scripture to my attention that opened up the whole biblical principle of giving and receiving to me. Through Malachi 3:10,11, I discovered that giving is not a one-way street. **You use the same faith to give AND to receive!**

I had preached on those verses in the Bible so many times before, but I had never preached it right! In Malachi 3:8 God says,

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?

In tithes and offerings.

When I read that, I thought, *How many people are robbing God!* At the time I didn't understand what this Scripture meant, and I cried out over and over, "God, where am I missing it?"

The Holy Spirit spoke in my spirit and said, "Read Malachi 3:8 again." When I did. He told me, "You can't rob God in the sense that you take anything away from Him. You can't diminish God. God is going to have just as much left no matter how much you think you've taken from Him. He isn't broke. He owns all the silver and gold in the earth. *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof* (Psalm 24:1). He owns it all. So you really can't rob Him.

"Well then, Lord, what does it mean to rob God?" I asked. And He reminded me of something that happened with Evelyn when our children were babies.

When they were still bottle feeding and they would quit drinking the milk, Evelyn would try to get them to drink a little more. Sometimes they wouldn't drink any more, and they would just throw the bottle on the floor. Then when they were a little older and she began to give them strained food, sometimes they'd eat a spoonful, then sweep the plate right off the high chair tray onto the floor.

One day I walked into the house and found my wife crying, and I asked, "Evelyn, what's the matter?"

She said, "I can't get this baby to eat. If she doesn't eat, she's going to get sick!" Suddenly I realized that this is what Malachi 3:8 meant by our robbing God! Our children were robbing their mother of the ability to give them the food they needed in order to live. ***And when we give and don't expect to receive, we're robbing God of the opportunity to meet our needs and give to us, because we have been doing the same things that babies do—SWEEPING THE THINGS GOD WANTS TO GIVE US RIGHT OFF THE TABLE!***

Then God goes on to say in Malachi 3:9, *Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me.* Now God didn't say that He cursed you, because the devil is the one who puts curses on people. But I believe many bad things happen to Christians because when we don't give our tithes and our offerings, we rob God of His ability to give to us, and it leaves us wide open to satan's attack.

Of course, we know some bad things are going to happen in life. But do so many bad things have to happen to believers? I mean, if we're not careful there will be very little difference between us and the world, who doesn't love God. Oftentimes we're just as sick and have just as much trouble. And it shouldn't be

that way!

Now I'm not saying that we'll never get sick. I'm not saying that we'll never have hard times. I'm not saying that we'll never run into trouble, because the Bible says, *In the world ye shall have tribulation* (John 16:33). **But there should be a difference between a child of God and someone who doesn't believe God!** We've got heaven on our side! We've got the blessing connection with God through our giving! **WHEN WE GIVE AND DON'T PARK BESIDE OUR GIVING, THAT BECOMES OUR CONNECTION TO GOD'S EVERYTHING!**

I tell you, I'm ready for God to stop the bad things that are happening to His people! I'm ready for sickness to leave us. I'm ready for our bills to be paid. I'm ready for money to be in our wallets. I'm ready for us to have overflowing bank accounts. I'm ready for us to have good cars. I'm ready for us to live in good houses. I'm ready for us to be delivered by the power of God. I'm ready for us to be full of the Holy Ghost and fire! ***I'm ready for good things to happen to you and me through our giving!***

GET UNDER THE SPOUT WHERE GOD'S GLORY IS POURED OUT!

In Malachi 3:10 God gives us the key to receiving all the good things He wants to bless us with. He says, *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse*, which is His great temple and the things connected to it through which He sends His Word to the ends of the earth. So when you give to the Lord, you're enabling the Gospel to be preached around the world!

Then He continues, *Prove me now*. Let's stop right there for a moment because I want you to notice two things about that verse.

First, God didn't say, "Prove Me tomorrow or next week or next year." He said, "Prove Me now!" Friend, you may have a now problem. You may have a now pain. You may have a now loss. You may have a now enemy. You may have a now battle you're not winning. You may have a now discouragement. You may have a now sickness. **But if you're a born-again believer, you have a NOW God who is in the NOW of your life, and He can give you a NOW kind of miracle!**

Second, in that day God was dealing with the people of Israel concerning their giving.

Some believed His Word, and some didn't. Some of them were giving to Him right off the top — the tenth, their firstfruits — and they were putting food in His house. But others were keeping it for themselves. They were not giving God anything. And if they gave Him something, it was their worst. It was something they just pitched into the offering plate without thinking, without

realizing that they should obey the Bible in the way that God laid it down — according to the principle of giving and receiving.

So He said, "Those of you who don't really believe this, prove Me." Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it (v. 10).

Praise God, He never tells you to do something that you can't prove to your benefit.

He gives you indisputable proof! He gives you undeniable evidence!

What is the evidence He gives? He starts opening the windows of heaven! Now God doesn't shut those windows, because He is a good God. We shut them up by not giving and expecting to receive back! The moment you obey the Lord and give your tithes and offerings, He steps out on the portals of glory and starts pouring down His spiritual blessings into your life!

Have you ever thought about how God pours? He pours to overflowing—more than you can contain! I TELL YOU, THE IMPORTANT THING TO DO AFTER YOU GIVE IS TO GET UNDER THOSE HEAVENLY WINDOWS, TO GET UNDER THE SPOUT WHERE GOD'S GLORY IS POURED OUT!

How do you get under the windows of heaven? By getting your expecter out! You see, it's like a farmer who plants his seed. No farmer plants seed and then forgets about it. He plants his seed and then works it and cultivates it, *but the whole time he's looking for the harvest.* He's expecting to receive something back from the seed he's sown!

When you plant your seed—when you give to God of your time, your money, your talent— you can start expecting a miracle harvest in return! You can start expecting miracles to come your way. You can start expecting God to send them in from the north, the south, the east, and the west! If your miracle doesn't come this morning, expect it to come tonight. If it doesn't come today, expect it to come tomorrow. If it doesn't come this week, expect it to come next week, next month, next year. **BUT EXPECT IT TO COME!**

Friend, when you give to the Lord, expect to receive His unlimited supply because you need God to smile on you. You need heaven to open up to you. You need healing from on high. You need financial increase from on high. You need the power of the Holy Ghost from on high. You need miracles from on high. You need God to change your circumstances from on high! *You need Him to pour you out a blessing where there is not room enough to receive it all!*

WHEN YOU GIVE, GOD PROMISES TO REBUKE THE DEVOURER FOR YOUR SAKE!

I used to say that I had never met anyone whom God blessed so much that

he or she couldn't contain it all. But I didn't know what I was talking about, and God began to deal with me on that issue. He told me, "I'm talking about things coming from heaven." As I thought about that, I realized that the blessings of the Lord do come from heaven. I mean, all the resources of heaven are at His command!

For the first time I understood that God was not only talking about material blessings but also about the spiritual blessings He pours into our lives to take away worry, hate, bitterness, discouragement, and all those bad things that come into our minds for which we need healing.

But notice He doesn't stop there.

In Malachi 3:11 God says, *And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes.* Now the word *rebuke* in the original Greek means to say, "Stop it! That's enough!" In this verse God is telling you He will rebuke the things that are coming against your body, against your finances, against your family, against your life, by saying to the devourer, "Don't hurt My child! Don't you do it! Get out of my children's lives! Quit bothering their children! Quit taking their jobs! Quit ruining their businesses! Quit taking their money! Stop it! That's enough!" Praise God, I'm for that! ***I want the devourer to stop devouring your life and mine!***

Did you know that the word *devourer* actually means "seed-eater"? Many times when you start to plant your seeds of faith to God, the devil will come to eat your seed before you can plant it—before it can grow, develop, and become wheat, cotton, apples, or pineapples — before it can be harvested and become a blessing! Why? **Because if he can steal your seed before it's in the ground, you can't plant more seed, and you can't get your needs met!**

But God promises that when you give, He'll rebuke the seed-eater, the devourer, for your sake! And when satan flees, God's blessings are allowed to multiply in your life without resistance! Not only are you delivered from the devil but also you are put into a position of having a miracle supply come into your life!

Oh, *what a close relationship God has with givers and receivers!* He rebukes your enemies! He rebukes every weapon formed against you (see Isaiah 54:17)! He rebukes every fiery dart and arrow that the wicked one, the devourer, hurls at you (see Ephesians 6:16)! You think you're not special in the Lord's eyes? **God Almighty Himself said He would stop satan in his tracks just for you!**

GOD IS THE GREATEST GIVER AND RECEIVER OF ALL!

God is the greatest giver of all. John 3:16 says,

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He sent Jesus to the cross, but He didn't send Him there to give His life only. He didn't give Jesus in order to say, "Son, I want to see how much You can suffer." God gave, expecting to receive a harvest! He said, "I want to give You so that whosoever will believe in Me shall not perish but have everlasting life. I'm giving You that I may receive those lost souls back to Myself!"

Friend, God was into giving AND receiving! The apostle Paul was into giving AND receiving! The Philippian Christians were into giving AND receiving! ***And you and I must get into giving AND receiving in order for God to open the windows of heaven and bless us!***

Now you may be giving to God and living for Him with every fiber of your being, but if you've never expected to receive anything back from the Lord, you've probably never stood under those heavenly windows. You've probably never cashed in your receipt from your account in heaven. You've probably never had the Lord rebuke the devourer for your sake.

Perhaps you've heard so many people talk against giving and receiving that you're not sure what to believe. But the Bible teaches it! The Word of God says to do it! So who are you going to believe? Who are you going to follow? Are you going to follow somebody else's way, or are you going to follow God's way?

Oh, brother, sister, don't park beside your giving! There's receiving out there! How many thousands of dollars have you and I missed that God has sent our way, because we weren't looking for it or because we weren't expecting to receive?

Miracles are coming toward you or past you every day of your life, but if you're not looking for them, they just go on by! But when you give and you're expecting to receive, when you're looking for a miracle and it comes by, you recognize it. You reach out and pull it in, because your faith makes all the difference as to whether or not you receive your miracle!

Have miracles been passing you by lately? Have you been missing opportunities to cash in your heavenly receipts to get your needs met? If so, make a fresh commitment that, starting today, the next money you get, you'll give one tenth of it to the Lord, and then you'll begin to look for your miracle! You'll expect to receive!

You'll expect to cash in your receipt! You can begin right now by getting your expecter out to receive your miracle as you make this declaration of faith out loud:

I'm a giver, and starting now, when I give my tithes and offerings to the Lord, I'm getting into receiving from God. I'm coming out of my financial mess. I'm going to have financial victory. I'm going to taste the wealth of God. I'm not

going to be poor anymore. I'm not going to be owing somebody money anymore. I'm going to pay my debts off. I'm coming into agreement with Oral Roberts that I will cash in my receipts with God, and I will not come out of this agreement! I shall receive in due season! I AM NOW A NEW CREATURE! I THINK DIFFERENTLY! I BELIEVE DIFFERENTLY! AND PRAISE GOD, FROM NOW ON I RECEIVE DIFFERENTLY!

Chapter 7

Don't Park by Your Age

Age is Not a Factor in the Kingdom of God

Did you know that there is no such thing as age with God? If you have life, if you're full of His Spirit, if you have the desire to find your place in His kingdom and do it well, you don't have to park by your age. ***You can be useful at every age!***

King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, said in Ecclesiastes 12:1, *Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth.* Notice that he said to remember God now in your youth, not sometime down the road when you're older, but now while you're filled with zest for life, while you have a tremendous urge for life, while you have a shining look in your eyes, while you still have that wonderful vitality and strength about you that comes from being young! Why? *Because nobody can truly enjoy God like a young person!*

Many young people are trudging about aimlessly, trying to find the true meaning of life because they don't have a God-given vision for their lives. They don't have a goal. They don't have a dream. They're walking around like zombies, and they don't know where they're going *because they're parked in their youth!* They're wrapped up in worldly pleasures. They have no room or no time for their Lord and Savior, and they don't have a clue about His plan for their lives. FRIEND, IF YOU'RE A YOUNG PERSON, MAKE SURE YOU DON'T PARK BY YOUR YOUTH!

I parked my life many times when I was young, but I remember the awakening. After running away from home and throwing my life away on worldly dreams, I received the Holy Spirit. And it caused me to discover that I could commit to a new possibility for my life in Jesus.

I'm so glad that I gave my life to the *Lord when I was seventeen!* I felt God in me so strong, and at that young age He gave me the high calling for my life. He told me then that He was going to heal my body of tuberculosis and that I was to take the message of His healing power to my generation. The following year I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and my prayer language of speaking in tongues. And through that experience, I saw the vision of this ministry.

Do you remember the story in Acts 2 of how Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost and told the great multitude what speaking in tongues and the baptism of the Holy Spirit meant? He said,

This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass

in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams (vv. 16,17).

Let me tell you, nobody can see a vision like a young person!

Young men and women can look ahead to the time when they'll be fathers and mothers and when they'll build their homes. They can look out at the fields and create in their minds great farms, great businesses, or great institutions. They can envision themselves becoming great golfers, baseball players, or even president of this country. *And they can receive a vision of the plan God created for them before the foundation of the world was framed!*

Young people who hook up with Jesus, who put all of their time and energy into serving the Lord, receive a fresh anointing in their lives. ***And the anointing will give a person a new direction, a new purpose, a new reason for being on this earth!***

LIFE BEGINS AT FORTY!

Your middle years can also be wonderful years spent serving the Lord. They say that life begins at forty, and I really believe that, because those are the years when you begin to understand things that you didn't know before, when you begin to know what life is all about. I mean, you've been up and down the river a few times. You've been over the mountain and back, and you know the route. You know things you didn't know in your youth. And oh, it's so easy to get comfortable and park in your middle years! BUT DON'T DO IT!

These are also the years when men and women often get scared because their youth is gone. Women's skin may not be quite as soft to the touch. Men realize that they're growing older, and they often feel that they're losing their appeal. They may begin looking around at younger women, and pretty soon the marriage and home break up. It's been said that there are more divorces in the middle years than at any other age in our lives.

People need God to keep their homes intact! They need to keep Christ at the center of their lives and their families! When they do, the middle years can be great years when they get a recharge of their spiritual, mental, and physical batteries, ***and they can serve the Lord with both experience and exuberance!***

YOU NEED TO BEAT THOSE OLD FEATHERS OFF BECAUSE THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

Perhaps the finest time of our lives is in our mature years. Life in those years can be a wonderful experience, full of excitement, with opportunities to be used by the Lord on every hand. Did you know that Moses was eighty years old

before God began to use him, *and he delivered two million Jews from Egyptian bondage!* The Bible says that he was just as strong at the age of 120 as he was as a young man. He had wonderful eyesight, wonderful hearing, and wonderful strength in his body (see Deuteronomy 34:7).

Moses didn't park in his mature years, and the apostles and the early Christians didn't park there either. They didn't stop creating or working with their hands and with their minds. They didn't "rust out" and lie around until they died because of ease or retirement. ***They kept on going and giving of themselves. They kept on working for the Lord until the very last moments of their lives!***

God never intended for people to park in old age and retire! He commanded us in Genesis 1:28, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.* And in Genesis 3:19 He told us, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.* I believe retirement is one of the most terrible things the devil ever fostered on mankind, and some men and women who do retire pay a terrible penalty in their minds and in their physical bodies. Why? Because when you cease using your body to work, when you cease using your mind to think and create, you may live a few more years, but you become a walking dead person! You become heir to all kinds of diseases. *You tend to get old too quick!*

In Psalm 103:5 God promised to renew our youth — our strength — like the eagle's. Do you know what the eagle does when he gets old? He retreats to a solitary place, where he beats his old feathers off and grows brand-new ones, and he stays young until he dies.

Don't you think it's time you beat some of those old feathers off? Don't you think it's time you got rid of some of those old thoughts, old ideas, old hurts, old wounds, and old pet peeves and resentments? Don't you think it's time to beat those old feathers out of your soul and mind right now?

I tell you, when God gave me the final mandate for my life — to build the Golden Eagle Broadcasting Network—I had to beat some old feathers off. Don't misunderstand me; I wasn't parked in my life by any means. But when a fresh new vision comes, it always causes a surge of spiritual energy unlike anything else can.

That same kind of great stirring of my soul happened when God first called me into the healing ministry and then again when, His time came to build Oral Roberts University and later the City of Faith. Now He has placed a new mandate on me to build a Family Safe Programming™ television network to ensure the future of this ministry and ORU!

I wasn't sure what Evelyn's response would be when I had to tell her I had a new mandate from God. I knew she had been looking forward to a time of retirement and just having some fun in life. After all, we have been in this

ministry together for over fifty uninterrupted years! When I told her, she looked at me and asked, "How strong did you hear the calling?" I said, "As strong as when He called me to the healing ministry and to build ORU!" That's all it took. I knew from that moment that she was with me all the way!

You may say, "But, Oral, I can't go on. I hurt too much." Friend, everybody hurts. There isn't a person I know of in the world — young, middle-aged, or old —who doesn't have problems. You're going to have problems as long as you live! You simply have to stand up and face them, look them in the eye, and say, "I will defeat you in the Name of the Lord. I will win this battle through Jesus Christ my Redeemer!"

If you've been parking in your mature years, I challenge you to get up right now and start over by stirring up your faith in God and being young in your heart, young in your spirit, and young in your mind for the Lord. When the Bible says, *Your old men shall dream dreams*, it's not talking about the kind of dreams you dream when you look back over your life and reminisce. **That Scripture is talking about dreams of God's power in your life, dreams of what you can do for the Lord. AND WHEN YOU KEEP DREAMING THOSE KINDS OF DREAMS. YOU STAY YOUNG!**

Your mature years shouldn't be years of sickness, depression, fear, or torment.

They should be years of reflecting on the rest of your life and what you'll do with it! You've still got something to give, a seed to plant, a destiny to fulfill in Christ Jesus. *You can still expect miracles and see God manifest them in your life!* **OH, FRIEND, DON'T PARK IN YOUR MATURE YEARS BECAUSE THE BEST IS YET TO COME!**

WE NEED TO STAY THE COURSE BECAUSE HEAVEN IS AT THE FINISH LINE!

Near the close of Paul's life he declared,
I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith (II Timothy 4:7).

And perhaps that is the greatest point of all in this book: **Don't park before finishing your course!**

So many people are parked on their journey from earth to heaven. For instance, they start out in their spiritual walk with God, and they do well for a while. Then suddenly they just park. Some of them don't make any more spiritual progress. They get no closer to the Lord. They begin strong by going to church, and they get all excited about the preacher's message, about the praise and worship, about praying in the Holy Ghost. But then they park, and they stop

going to church unless there's a funeral, a marriage, or it's Easter or Christmas!

But can we take our soul and park it? Can we say to our physical body, "I will park you"? Is that what God wants us to do? Can we take our mind that God has filled with His wonderful concept of abundant life and say, "I'm tired of thinking. I'll just go off somewhere and quit thinking"?

Can we park ourselves in our circumstances, good or bad, and say, "I'm through trying"? Is that what God wants us to do with our lives? NO! GOD DOESN'T WANT YOU TO PARK! Why? Because if you park, you're violating the Word of God. You're tampering with the flow of life itself. You're drying up on the vine. You get old too quickly, regardless of your age. Your body loses its strength. Your mind is no longer sharp, clear, and clean, and your soul takes its ease and becomes sluggish.

Life should be a clean-cut process. We come into the world. We fill our place. We go out triumphantly. It's the law of the Lord. We cannot park our souls! We cannot park our lives! We need to stay the course because heaven is at the end of the way!

My brother, my sister, I want to pray for you right now with all of my heart lifted up to the Lord, believing that from this moment on you will stand up like a man or a woman and say,

*"I will fulfill my high calling! I will complete the mission God has given me to do in this world! I will stay the course! **I WILL NOT PARK!**"*

Heavenly Father, in the Name of Your only Son,

Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whose I am and whom I serve, I come to You, and I call upon You to deliver my dear brothers and sisters from the spirit of parking in their lives. I pray that they will not park beside that problem, that struggle, that circumstance any longer, that You will open them up to the power of Your miracles to set them free and keep them free.

My dear friend, I rebuke the devourer off your life, and I say, "Stop it! That's enough!" I come against that foul, tormenting affliction and disease in your body, and I command it to COME OUT! Satan, I charge you to take your hands off God's property. Loose this man, this woman, this young person, and let them go! Loose this human body! Loose this spirit! Devil, you're defeated! Pack up your bags, and move out of their life, in Jesus' Name!

My brother, my sister, I pray that the healing hand of God will touch your body and give you renewed life, health, and strength, that you will become a whole person who can face life with joy and not park. Oh, I can feel the power of God! I can feel the healing presence of Christ flowing through my being and flowing out toward you! Rise up out of that sickness you're parked in, and be healed for the glory of God!

I call the windows of heaven open in your life, and I call down the blessings of God upon you so abundantly that you won't be able to receive them all because they're so large! I pray that a miracle of God will happen to you, beginning NOW; and I'm believing that it will through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Now as you rise up out of that place you've been parked in, I pray that the Holy Ghost will come upon you and fill your heart with His love. I pray that God will give you great dreams and visions, new goals for your life, and new faith to move forward to the high calling He has for you to accomplish mighty exploits for His kingdom! Thank You, Lord, that Your glory is falling on Your sons and Your daughters right now and that they're receiving it in the precious, holy Name of Your Son, Jesus. Amen and amen!

Friend, if you prayed that prayer with me, I, believe that you're a new woman, a new man, a new young person! Don't ever park your life again. Don't ever park your soul again. Don't ever park your faith again. Don't ever park your giving again. ***DON'T EVER PARK***

ANYTHING ABOUT YOURSELF AGAIN!

Go on with God. Believe that your future holds something good from the Lord, and reach for those things that are ahead! Believe that healing is coming. Believe that financial increase is coming. Believe that victory is coming. Believe that you're a winner, in the Name of Jesus, and finish your course! ***When life is over and you cross the waters of Jordan over to the sunny banks of sweet Beulahland and walk into the loving arms of the*** Savior, you'll be able to say, "Thank God, I've made it home victoriously!"

In this world people seem to be eternally on the lookout for a place to park. Everywhere you look you see signs that say, “No Parking Allowed.” In spite of all the warnings, many people often park not only their vehicles but also their minds, their bodies, and their souls as well. Yet one of the single threads running throughout the Bible is the message, *DON'T PARK HERE!*

God has a calling and a purpose for you. He has put a plan for your life in your heart that is His highest calling in life for you! **BUT YOU CANT REACH IT BY PARKING!**



In this new book, Oral Roberts shows you how to move out of the “No Parking” zones of life and become the man or woman of God that you were created to be. Each Bible-based chapter is packed with powerful teachings designed to reveal the traps satan uses to cause you to park.

Learn how to keep the engine running, how to keep your soul in tune with God, **HOW TO STOP PARKING, AND HOW TO GO ON WITH YOUR LIFE SO YOU CAN REACH AHEAD TO THE GLORIOUS FUTURE GOD HAS FOR YOU!**

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